

Story 2043 (Transcribed
from Atatürk İlkokulu tape.

Narrator: Cemile Ertürk, 10

Location: Karacabey, kaza
town of Bursa
Province

Date: Spring 1966

The Goat Girl

Once there was and once there was not a woman who had no children. She was sitting before a window one Tuesday¹ when a herd of goats passed along the road near her house. The woman prayed, "O Allah, you have never given me any children, but I am asking you again for a child, even if it is only a goat child." Shortly after that the woman became pregnant, and nine months later she bore a child. It was a girl, but not an ordinary girl. It was a goat girl.

When this goat girl grew to full size, she used to help her mother do the housework. One day her mother gave her daughter permission to take the family's dirty clothes to a nearby stream and wash them. When the daughter reached the stream, she removed her goatskin. Beneath that goatskin was a very beautiful girl.

Coming along the road from the opposite direction

¹The child narrator names two days of the week in this tale, although neither of these days has any apparent significance for the action.

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was a young padishah. He admired the girl and gave her a ring.

When the girl had finished washing the clothes, she put on her goatskin again and returned home. Her mother tried to take from her the ring that had been given to her daughter, but the goat girl refused to let her have it.

On the following day the padishah sent to the goat girl's mother a request for permission to marry her daughter. At first the woman refused, saying, "I call her my daughter, but she is really just a goat." After the padishah had made several requests, however, the mother finally gave her to him.

The goat girl was taken to the palace and placed upon a table. Those who saw her said, "What a strange bride!" But the padishah paid little attention to what was said, and he ordered that a regular wedding ceremony should be held.

After the wedding the bride was willing to do her share of the cleaning and cooking, but this led to some difficulties. She went into the kitchen to help her mother-in-law cook, but the older woman struck her with

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a large spoon. Later, when the mother-in-law was rolling very thin dough to make böreks², the goat girl came again to help. But her mother-in-law this time struck her with a rolling pin.

One day there was a wedding ceremony in that town and the mother of the padishah prepared to attend it. The daughter-in-law wished to go with her, but the older woman said, "I cannot take a goat like you to a wedding."

As soon as her mother-in-law had departed, the girl took off her goatskin and put on her prettiest dress. She then proceeded to the wedding ceremony alone. There she sat and talked with the bride. Everyone admired her. Of course, the padishah's mother did not realize that beautiful guest was her own daughter-in-law. She went and asked the beautiful guest, "My dear, from what family do you come?"

The girl answered, "I am the daughter-in-law of a woman who hits people with large spoons and rolling pins."

²A small pastry often made with many layers of filo (a variant of phyllo), a very thin dough. Böreks may be filled with cheese, meat, or a vegetable preparation of some kind.

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But the woman did not understand what she was talking about.

As the party was ending, the goat girl left before any of the other guests did. Back at the palace, the girl quickly removed her dress and in its place put on her goatskin again.

On the following Sunday, the padishah went to his mother and said, "Mother, you still do not seem to understand the condition of my wife. Beneath the goatskin that she wears is a very beautiful girl." When the daughter-in-law removed her goatskin, the padishah's mother was amazed.

On the following day, the padishah and his wife attended the wedding ceremony together. Knowing now who she was, the other guests admired the goat girl even more than they had before.